

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

The Grand Canyon is the quintessential American landmark and one of Arizona's greatest treasures. From the jagged red cliffs of the canyon walls to the world-renowned Colorado River, it's easy to see why it was designated as a national park nearly a century ago. Winding through the Canyon, the Colorado River provides drinking water for 25 million Americans living as far west as Los Angeles. Families travel across the country and the world to experience the grandeur of the Grand Canyon, seeking opportunities to hike, rock climb, camp, raft, and simply enjoy the scenery. Visible strata in the Canyon walls provide one of the most complete records of geological history in the world, and Red Butte in the Kaibab National Forest contains an array of shrines, historic trails and archaeological sites. Furthermore, the Canyon and the adjacent areas are home to a rich diversity of plant and animal life, including 25 threatened and endangered animal species. The Grand Canyon is a unique, valuable landscape that we must protect.

Unfortunately, a toxic threat is growing at the edge of the Grand Canyon. Due to the rising price of uranium, the number of hard-rock mining claims across the West has increased exponentially in recent years. There are at least 8,500 mining claims near the Canyon, which is up from the 100 claims on file in January of 2003. Eleven hundred of those claims are within five miles of the Canyon; the closest company to break ground, Denison Mines, is less than 2 miles from the Park boundary. That mine, known as "Arizona 1", received 38 violations from the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration in 2010 alone.

Mining so close to the Canyon could seriously impair the region's ecosystems: wreaking havoc on the landscape, drying up critical seeps and springs, disturbing fish and wildlife, and releasing toxic chemicals into the environment. With mining claims positioned so close to the Canyon and the Colorado River, a range of contaminants from heavy metals to uranium could also degrade the downstream water supply, impacting a water supply relied on by millions of Americans. Not to mention the fact that uranium mining produces permanent radioactive waste, an environmental toxin which must be disposed of in an urgent, safe manner.

In the months leading up to July of 2009, you received comments from nearly 100,000 citizens urging the Administration to withdraw one million acres of land around Grand Canyon National Park from new mining claims for up to twenty years- the longest period possible under current law. In addition to the 98,285 individual comments, 34 groups submitted a letter of support for protecting the Canyon from mining.

Thank you for putting a two year halt on new mining claims in July of 2009. We are now responding to the draft environmental impact statement assessing the impact of hardrock mining on lands within the Grand Canyon watershed. In order to safeguard one of our oldest and most well-known national treasures, we urge you to issue a twenty year withdrawal on the full one million acres. We want to ensure that the Grand Canyon is just as spectacular as it is now for generations to come.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress


Gary L. Ackerman
Member of Congress

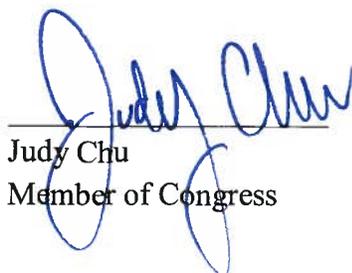

Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress


Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress

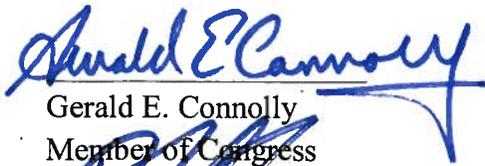

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

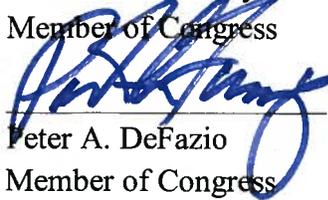

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

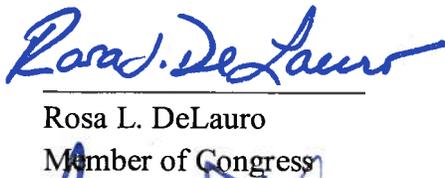

Michael E. Capuano
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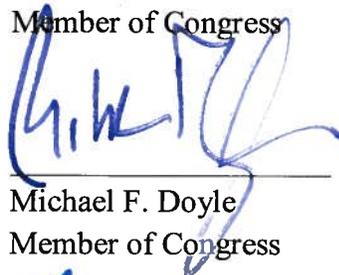

Judy Chu
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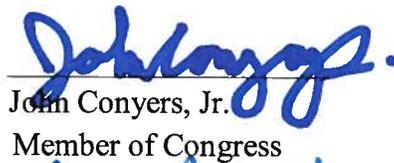

Michael F. Doyle
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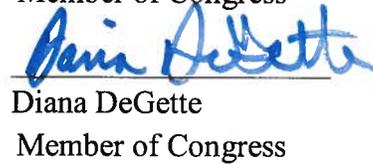

Bob Filner
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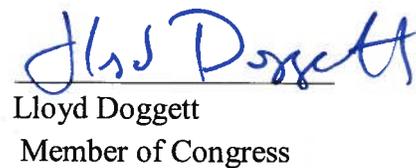

John Garamendi
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Maurice Hinchey
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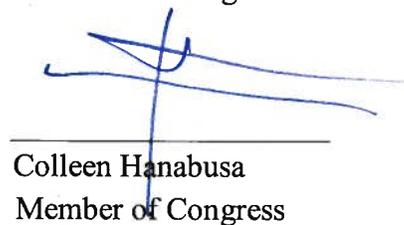

John Conyers, Jr.
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Diana DeGette
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Lloyd Doggett
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Sam Farr
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Barney Frank
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Colleen Hanabusa
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Martin Heinrich
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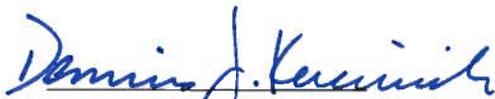

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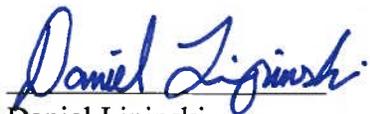
Michael M. Honda
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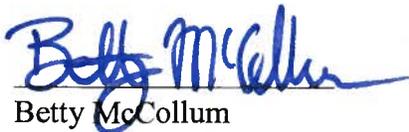
Dennis J. Kucinich
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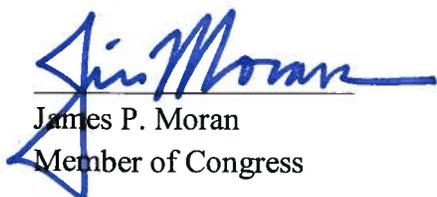
Daniel Lipinski
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James P. Moran
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Grace F. Napolitano
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Jay Inslee
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Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
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Barbara Lee
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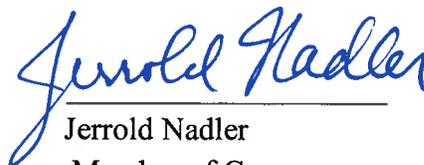
Zoe Lofgren
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Edward J. Markey
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Jerry McNerney
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Jerrold Nadler
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Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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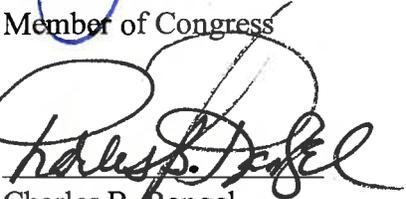
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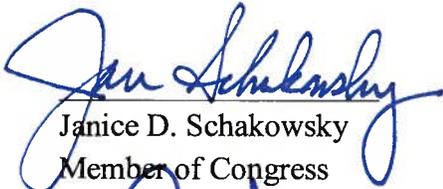
Steven R. Rothman
Member of Congress



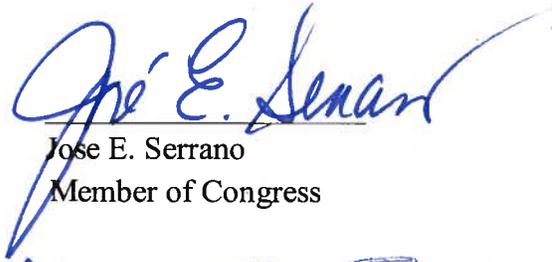
Lucille Roybal-Allard
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John P. Sarbanes
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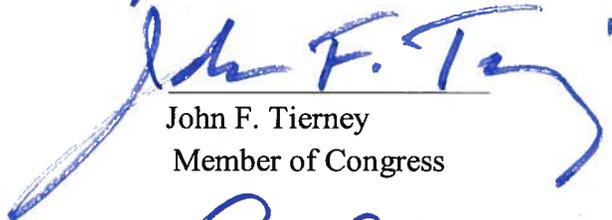
Janice D. Schakowsky
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Fortney Pete Stark
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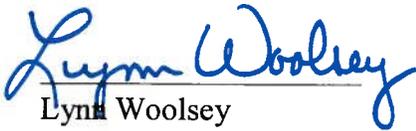
Paul Tonko
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Chris Van Hollen
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Maxine Waters
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Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress



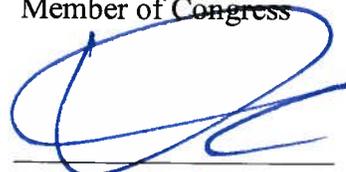
Henry Waxman
Member of Congress



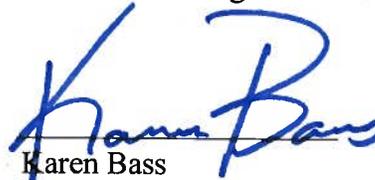
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Anthony Weiner
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David Wu
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